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# THE OPINION OF WITCHCRAFT Vindicated.

In an Answer to a Book Intituled the Question of *WITCHCRAFT* Debated.

Being a Letter to a Friend.

By *R. T.*

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# THE Opinion of *Witchcraft* VINDICATED.

*SIR,*

I Received yours, and with it that little treatiſe of Witchcraft, which you were pleaſed to ſend me: which when I had opened, I found the Author in his Preface, laying about him like a *Hercules* furens, or an *Ajax* maſtigophorus, and charging his oppoſers with no leſs than *Paganiſme*, acknowledging a plurality of Gods, and aſcribing

omnipotency to the Devil. This he doubts not but he ſhall make good with the ſame eaſe as he aſſerts it, and promiſes himſelf and his Reader, to force a ſurrender at the firſt aſſault. But his batteries are not of force enough to effect it, his ſtrongeſt arguments being little better than an αὐτὸς ἔφη, and his whole Book ſtanding upon no firmer ground than his own Suppoſals. The vaſt confidence which he ſeems to have in the ſtrength of his Arguments, had made me arm my ſelf with a more than ordinary care and circumſpection for the ſharp encounter I was like to receive from this great *Goliah*, but I have ſince found that I may lay aſide thoſe heavy Arms, and that a ſtone and a ſling will ſerve the turn.

At the entrance of his Book he layes before you the neceſſity, in which the *Eaſtern* Empire ſtood, of Juggling tricks and Impoſtures, to uphold it's greatneſs; and that the heathen Prieſts were by continual practice arrived to that perfection in cheating, that they ſtood not in need of the Devils aſſiſtance: from hence he would

would infer that the anſwers given at Oracles, were no other than cheats put upon the people, and the Prieſts inventions. But 'tis very improbable that the Devil, who had the liberty of poſſeſſing ſo many Bodies (as we find he had by ſeveral undeniable inſtances of the New-Teſtament) ſhould be debarred that of a wicked Idolatrous Prieſt, or the ſhrines of the heathen Gods, or, that if he had that freedom, he would not make uſe of it, for the eſtabliſhing of his own Kingdom. After this he tells you of the great variety of Impoſtures uſed by them, all which he reduces to four heads, *viz.* Juggling, Inchanting, Conjecturing, and Divining. Of theſe he gives you definitions, *ad arbitrium*, and you muſt take them on his word, as if that were as uncontroulable as the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, he ſayes that a Familiar was no Devil, but a confederated perſon, privy to the plot, and aſſiſtant to the performance. I do not deny but ſome cheats of this Nature have been, and yet are in the World, but he that from hence concludes that all

are ſo, is but a bad Logician. For my part, I cannot be convinc'd by ſuch an Argument, when I find (as I ſhall endeavour to prove) both the teſtimonies of Scripture and Hiſtory againſt it. Nor indeed, is there any probability, that the Heathen Prieſts could ſo readily give anſwers to all queſtions (put to them on the ſudden, and *ex improviſo*) as to keep up the credit of their Oracles to that height they were at for many Ages together: neither may we eaſily ſuppoſe that this miraculous Art of cheating could be conveyed from one Prieſt to another, and not one of ſo many thouſands diſcover the deceit to the World; and that of ſo great a number, all ſhould be ſo ready witted, as to give their anſwers at a venture, and yet with ſo much cunning, as that whatever happen'd, the Oracles ſhould not be taxed with falſhood, which I believe our Author, if he were put to it, would find ſomething harder to perform than he ſeems to think it. Yet all this he eaſily believes they did, and by ſuch tricks magnified their Idols, and

ſeduced the common people, for which cauſe they were ſo great an abomination before God, as that in the Law given by *Moſes*, he ſo ſtrictly gave in charge to the *Iſraelites*, the rooting them out from among them. To this purpoſe he quotes the eighteenth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth verſes. And this he thinks to be as conſiderable a place as any can be brought from the whole Bible for the proof of Witches. Here therefore he takes occaſion to fall foul with our Tranſlatours of the Bible, for that, ſayes he, they have falſly Tranſlated the tenth and eleventh verſes, making them more ſignificant to that purpoſe than they are in the Original. Wherefore I think it will not be much amiſs to compare the Authors Tranſlation of thoſe two Verſes and ours with the *Hebrew* ſo far as they differ one from the other: ours runs thus.

There ſhall not be found among you any that maketh his Son, or his Daughter to paſs through the fire, or that uſeth Divinations, or an obſerver of times,

or an Inchanter, or a Witch.

Or a Charmer, or a Conſulter with familiar Spirits, or Wizards, or a *Necromancer*.

Now the main difference (for I paſs by thoſe of leſs concernment) is that inſtead of a Witch, in the tenth verſe this Author has put the word miracle-monger; and for a Conſulter with familiar Spirits, a ſeeker of an Oracle. Now in theſe places he ſeems much to blame, for having ſo peremptorily charg'd the learned Tranſlatours of the Bible with a falſe interpretation, making himſelf the only Judge in the ſenſe of the original, and refuſing any tranſlation that ſuites not with his fancy, meerly for that reaſon. Now the original being rightly conſidered, we ſhall find but little difference between it and our tranſlation, as in that of a Witch, the *Hebrew* word is מכשף, coming from the word כשף, which word, if we may believe the beſt *Hebricians*, ſignifies Witchcraft, or faſcination: for ſo *Buxtorfe*, and *Xantes Pagninus* underſtand it, expounding it by theſe words,

words, *faſcinum*, *maleficium*, and *Præſtigium*: and ſo *Pagninus* in his tranſlation of the Bible, in which he endeavour'd to come as near the ſenſe of the original, as was poſſible for him, has in this very place expounded the *Hebrew* מכשף, *Maleficus*, which is the ſame with our word Witch; *Junius* and *Tremellius* render it, *Præſtigiator*, which has the ſame ſignification with the other, though our Author takes it for no more than a meer Juggler, or to uſe his word, a miracle-monger. But the word has more in it than ſo, for though it be true, that every *Præſtigiator* is a miracle-monger, a Juggler, or a Coozner, yet as we find it alwayes uſed in Authors, it implyes a doing of thoſe deceits by Witchcraft. As for what he ſayes of the word φάρμακος in the *Septuagint*, that it ſignifies an Impoſtor, I cannot at all conceive why he ſhould ſo poſitively aſſert it, or at leaſt why I ſhould believe it, except he could prove from good Authors, that the genuine ſignification of the word is ſo; for I do not at all find it any otherwiſe

than our word Witch has that ſignification, for it is certain that Witches are the greateſt Impoſtors of the World: and he were extremely irrational, that would believe that the Devil does really thoſe things which many times he ſeems to do, and that it is in his power to transform the bodies of men and women into thoſe of Dogs, or Cats, or any other Creatures. Yet as we cannot deny but the Devil, having a greater inſight into natural Phyloſophy than ever yet any man has attain'd to, may perform thoſe things by natural means, which will yet be beyond the reach of thoſe who are in the higheſt rank among us, and have gone fartheſt in the wayes of nature, ſo we may eaſily believe, that he is more cunning in his tricks, whereby he deceives the ſenſes, and that many times he ſeems to change the outward forms of bodies, when he only deceives the ſight by the interpoſition of colours, and condenſation of air, between the eyes of the beholders and the object, or many other wayes which to us are altogether unknown: But for us to deny

that

that the Devil can do ſuch things, only becauſe we cannot tell how they are done, or to ſay that he muſt be omnipotent, to deceive our weak ſenſes, is ſo far from a rational argument, that nothing but the want of reaſon can produce ſuch ridiculous fancies. But to proceed, the *Greek* word φάρμακος, ſayes he, in this place ſignifies an Impoſtour, not a poyſoner, for it is ridiculous to think that King *Manaſſeth*, and Queen *Jezabel*, exercis'd the Art of poyſoning. Now I find it not at all neceſſary to ſay that they uſed the Art of poyſoning, though we deny that they were meer Jugglers: yet I ſee nothing ſo ridiculous in that aſſertion as he does; for it may with reaſon enough be ſuppoſed, that Witches do, by their confederated Devils, infuſe poyſonous and noxious humours into thoſe bodies which they deſire to hurt: and 'tis likely that *Manaſſeth* and *Jezabel*, being practitioners in that Art, were not wanting in any thing that belong'd to their profeſſion. Now where he ſayes that theſe miracle-mongers (as he calls them) were ſo ſeverely prohi-

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prohibited in the Law of *Moſes*, becauſe they acted ſtrange things in the ſight of the people, to confirm them in a falſe Religion, I can eaſily grant him that this was one cauſe, but that it was the onely cauſe I cannot readily believe, ſince the Art was in it ſelf wicked, and moſt deteſtable; and by conſequence ſo diſpleaſing to God, that he would not ſuffer it among his people: and beſides, I do not think that it was the deſign of all thoſe that profeſſed this Art, to eſtabliſh a falſe Religion, but rather that they did it for gain, by fore-telling things to come, as 'tis likely the Witch of *Endor* did. As for what he objects of their being coupled together with Sooth-ſayers, many times in thoſe places of Scripture, where mention is made of Idolatry, it is not at all ſtrange, for where ſhould we ſo reaſonable expect to find thoſe wicked Artiſts, as with an Idolatrous and ungodly people. And we may eaſily think, that the Devil when he finds a people inclin'd to Idolatry will not be wanting to the farther deceiving of them, ſo far as his falſe miracles and

and lying wonders can conduce to it: But to conclude from hence, he ſeems to do, that they were prohibited meerly for upholding it, I ſee no colour of reaſon.

But here I find my Author endeavouring to perſwade the World that *Pharaoh*'s Magicians were nothing elſe but Jugglers, and brought Serpents in their ſleeves or pockets to make a fool of *Pharaoh*, by conveying them into the place of their ſticks by ſome ſlye trick of Legerdemain. But I find much difficulty in this cheat; for firſt, I cannot poſſibly believe, that *Moſes* and *Aaron* told the Magcians before hand what it was they intended to do, and if not, how it came to paſs that they were provided of neceſſaries for ſuch a cheat; and were ſo ready at *Pharaoh*'s call, without ſo much as deſiring time to catch the Serpents, and to pull out their ſtings, for fear of the worſt (for otherwiſe it had been a kind of jeaſting with edged tools.) But to be ſo quick at it, was I believe an Art beyond the reach of modern Jugglers. But ſuppoſe they were

were furniſhed with all things requiſite, I cannot ſee how that could ſerve their turns, for we read in the Text, they did as *Aaron* had done, for they caſt down every man his Rod, and it became a Serpent; and in the *Hebrew* it is the ſame, וישליכו איש מטהו *et projacerunt unusquisque, virgam ſuam*, and the *Septuagint* Καὶ ἔρριψαν ἕκαστος τὴν ῥαβδὸν αὐτῶν. By theſe I think it plainly appears that the Magicians caſt down Rods, which afterwards became, or at leaſt ſeemed to be turn'd into Serpents. Now I believe, our Author will have enough to do, to ſhow by what means thoſe miracle-mongers could make their Rods ſeem to the eyes of *Pharaoh*, and the other Spectators, after they had thrown them down, to be chang'd into Serpents, and to think that when they had once caſt them out of their hands, they could recover them again, and lay Serpents in their places (except they could have ſhown *Pharaoh* and his attendants, ſome pretty thing upon the Wall, to employ their eyes in the mean time) is a whimſey beyond the reach

reach of imagination. And though we ſuppoſe, that *Pharaoh* and his Nobles were ſuch fools, yet *Moſes* and *Aaron* were wiſe men, and one would think, being concerned themſelves, might have ſo carefully obſerved them as to diſcover it. But if we could poſſibly conceive, that notwithſtanding all thoſe difficulties, it might be a meer Juggle, the Gordian knot is yet behind, which I will preſent to our Author to unty (if he can) which is that he would be pleas'd to tell me by what kind of Legerdemain theſe men could turn the waters of the Rivers into blood, or if by any pretty ſlight of hand they could make the Frogs come up from the Waters upon the Land of *Egypt*: and if they could, why they were to ſeek at the bringing of Lice, for to humane reaſon this ſeems as eaſie as either of the other two. Here methinks I find mine Author at a ſtand; and becauſe he has not his anſwer ready, I would adviſe him in the mean time to ſay, that certainly that theſe Magicians dealt with the Devil, by whoſe aſſiſtance they went thus far in oppoſition

to

to *Moſes* and *Aaron*, but that here God (without whoſe permiſſion the Devil can do nothing) thought good to ſet his bounds that he might go no farther. And this, 'tis probable, made them ſay that the finger of God was in it, becauſe they found that power by which they acted, reſtrain'd by a greater: for if they had done theſe things by ſlight of hand, they would only have thought that *Moſes* and *Aaron* were more cunning Jugglers than themſelves, without acknowledging that it was the finger of God that did it. But I find him yet very unwilling to yield, becauſe, ſayes he, whoſoever believes that the Devil could turn theſe ſtaves into Serpents, aſcribes to him an omnipotent creating power: But if this be all he ſticks at, I ſhall quickly remove that obſtacle, by ſhowing upon how little reaſon it is founded; for firſt let him conſider the vaſt difference which is between creating all things of nothing, and changing one thing into another: for by creating we underſtand the giving of the firſt being, and making not onely the thing, but the

matter

matter alſo, of which it is compos'd. Now I ſee nothing of this aſcribed to the Devil by that opinion. Secondly, let him obſerve that many times ſuch changes are ſeen in nature, Serpents being bred of the corruption of other bodies, even of rotten Trees and ſticks: and the Devil having had time enough to ſearch into the wayes of Nature, might probably follow the ſame ſteps which ſhe treads in changes of this kind, though he might go faſter, and be ſooner at his journeys end: and ſeeing no man has yet attain'd to that perfection in Natural Philoſophy, as to know the thouſandth part of what may be done by natural means, it is but vanity in any one to meaſure the time which is requiſite, for ſuch a production being wrought by Supernatural Agents, eſpecially ſeeing no man knows the means by which it is done (for would not that man make himſelf extremely ridiculous, that ſhould with an ignorant confidence affirm that 'tis impoſſible to take the Copy of a Book by any means ſooner than by writing, becauſe he never knew the Art

of

of Printing? ) Now if he grants that the ſeed of a Serpent is in a ſtick, and that the Devil of this ſeed may produce a Serpent (as he ſeems to do) and that ſooner than they are form'd by Nature, for he confeſſes that Devils may ſtrangely promote the generation of ſeveral Creatures, if I ſay this be granted, I may as well ſay that he can do it in a minute. For if by his great skill he can find out wayes of accelerating generation, why may not he improve thoſe wayes, by the greatneſs of his skill ſo far as to do that in an hour, which nature does in a year: for to ſay, that in regard the Devils do theſe things by application of matter to matter, they cannot produce a Creature of it's ſeed without ſuch a ſpace of time as to us ſeems convenient, is to meaſure the Devils knowledge by our own, and to fathom the depth of Nature by the ſhort line of our underſtandings. But I ſee no neceſſity of believing that the Devil chang'd thoſe Rods into Serpents, neither do I believe it, but rather think that it was a meer illuſion and deceit of the

the Devils, who might either deceive the lookers on with an appearance of what was not really there, or by placing true Serpents inſtead of the ſtaves. And now I would not have this Author take me up, and ſay that if I once recede from the letter of the Text, he may as well ſay 'tis a Juggle of the Magicians, for I have already ſaid that it is not at all conceivable, that it was poſſible for the Magicians to do it by meer humane Art, in regard that when they threw them down, they were yet ſtaves; but though we deny that it could be done by them, we may yet believe that the Devil has both agility, and ſubtilty enough to effect it. But if he will, after all this, believe that the Magicians might, by ſlight of hand, conveigh away the ſtaves, and lay Serpents in their places, certainly he cannot think that they turn'd the waters into blood, and brought up Frogs by ſlight; for I cannot ſee how they could carry Frogs enough about them to ſtrew the Land with, neither do I believe the Author himſelf can gueſs how it might be

done, becauſe he ſilently paſs'd by this place of Scripture. As for the interpretation which he has given to the *Hebrew* בלהטיהם, by their tricks, (thinking from thence to infer that they were no other than the tricks of the Magicians, though ſuch an inference is of ſmall force, it properly ſignifies by their Inchantments; and ſo *Junius* and *Tremellius*, *Arias Montanus*, and *Pagninus* expound it, all three in the ſame words, *Incantationibus ſuis*, and in this his expoſition of it he differs from moſt, if not all Tranſlatours. I am of the ſame opinion with him where he ſayes the Scripture ſpeaks oftentimes according to the deceived apprehenſions of men, and I cannot deny but it may be ſo in this expreſſion of the ſtaves being turn'd into Serpents; but that it is ſo, as he affirms, in that of *Samuels* being raiſed when *Saul* came to conſult the Witch of *Endor*, I cannot ſay, for the Scripture ſayes not that the Witch raiſed *Samuel*, and that he was ſent by God, is not ſo very improbable as he would make it: for though God to ſhew his diſpleaſure againſt

againſt *Saul*, had refuſed to anſwer when he enquired of him, there is no reaſon from thence to conclude that he did not at this time ſend *Samuel* to him, ſeeing God might do it for many reaſons unknown to us: And 'tis probable that if he had at firſt anſwered *Saul* (though he had received the ſame anſwer as he did now from the mouth of *Samuel*) he had not been ſtricken with ſo great a ſence of his ſin, and of Gods anger againſt him, as by being firſt reduced to the extreamity of not knowing what to do, or whither to go for counſel, becauſe God had refuſed to anſwer him. And to ſay that 'tis unlikely that God would anſwer him when he ſought in a forbidden way, is vain, for we ſee that he did the ſame, in ſending *Elijah* to meet the Meſſengers of *Ahaziah*, when they were going to enquire of *Beelzebub*, in the firſt Chapter of the ſecond book of the *Kings*. But we muſt not look for a reaſon of all Gods actions; we find that many times his great wiſdom ſees good to do thoſe things which to us ſeem very ſtrange, and

unaccountable. Beſides 'tis no ſmall motive to perſwade us that it was *Samuel*, that the Witch cryed out, as at ſome unexpected accident, being, it may be, frighten'd at the ſight of one whom ſhe ſo little expected: and this, 'tis probable, made her ſay that ſhe had ſeen a God coming up from the Earth, meaning a bleſſed Spirit. As for his Argument drawn from *Samuels* words, *Why haſt thou diſquieted me?* That he was not ſent by God, ſeeing that could have been no trouble to him, it is of no force at all, for thoſe words were ſpoken to *Saul's* capacity, and as being words of courſe, importing no more than if he had ſaid, why haſt thou not ſuffered my Body to reſt? that is, lye ſtill in the grave: and the *Hebrew* word in this place implyes no more than, why haſt thou mov'd me to come up: So this phraſe of dead bodies, reſting, and being diſturbed, is uſual with us, though we know that they are not at all ſenſible of repoſe, or diſquiet. But if it were not *Samuel*, 'tis very irrational to believe that it was either the

Witch

Witch, or any confederated perſon, for two reaſons; firſt, becauſe it is ſaid in the Scripture, that *Saul* knew that it was *Samuel*, and he bowed himſelf; for it is not imaginable that any man could ſo change his face, as that *Saul*, (who queſtionleſs was well enough acquainted with *Samuels* countenance) could be deceiv'd by it: and to think that *Saul* ſaw him not is as ridiculous, for then why did he bow himſelf? Secondly, becauſe he foretold *Saul's* Death; for if, as this Author ſuppoſes, it had been ſaid by the Woman at a venture, the more cunning way had been to have told him that he ſhould live, for then if he had died, who could have accuſed her of falſhood? If he had liv'd ſhe had told the truth: But to tell him poſitively that he ſhould dye, and not only himſelf, but his Sons too, and this with a limitation of time, to morrow, was ſomething too much to be ſpoken at a venture.

The ſecond difference between our Tranſlation and the Authors is, where he puts a ſeeker of an Oracle, for a Conſul-

ter with familiar Spirits. Here he tells you that the word אוב is taken in Scripture ſometimes for the gift of Oracling, ſometimes for the perſon that has ſuch a gift: this is as much, and no more, than if he had told you that he is pleas'd to underſtand it ſo; I confeſs as an Oracler may be underſtood, that is, for one that takes and gives anſwers from the Devil, שאל אוב, may have that ſignification; for *ob* properly ſignifies a *Dæmon*, or an evil Spirit, and ſo the beſt *Hebricians* expound it: now this being the true ſence of the word *ob*, I ſee no reaſon for blaming our Tranſlatours, who have not at all erred from the Original in this place. But he underſtands an Oracler otherwiſe, to wit, for one that gave anſwers at a venture, and only followed the dictates of his own fancy, counterfeiting ſtrange voices, thereby to deceive the people, &c. And ſo he interprets the *Greek* Πυθῶν and πνεῦμα Πύθονος, but how they came by that ſignification I cannot tell, for I find it no where but in his Book. And from the Scripture I think the contrary may be

gather'd,

gather'd, *viz.* That *ob* and Python, are taken for an evil Spirit that poſſeſs'd the perſon Divining, and not for the perſon himſelf; we read in *Leviticus*, the twentieth Chapter, and the twenty ſeventh verſe, and a Man or a Woman בי יהיה בהם אוב when there is in them a *Python*; which words [in them] ſeem to imply ſomething of this Nature, and that the *ob* was ſome diſtinct being from the perſon in whom it was, for he could not be in himſelf. And we find in ſome old Tranſlations, where mention is made of *Saul*'s turning the Witches out of *Iſrael*, 'tis ſaid, *Et qui Pythones habebant in ventre.* But whoſoever reads the ſixteenth Chapter of the *Acts* of the Holy Apoſtles, will be fully confirm'd that this is the meaning of Πνεῦμα Πύθωνος, except he himſelf be poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of contradiction, for he there ſhall find that as St. *Paul* was walking he met a Maid, ἔχουσαν Πνεῦμα Πύθωνος having a Spirit of Divination (as our Tranſlation renders it) and in the eighteenth verſe, *Paul* turning himſelf τῷ Πνεύματι εἶπε, he

ſaid to the Spirit, I command thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt to come out of her, and it came out that ſame hour. This methinks ſhews plainly to any body but our Author, that this kind of Divining was done by the help of the Devil. But it may be he will ſay (for I know no other way that he can anſwer it) that ſhe did but deceive the people by counterfeiting ſtrange voices, and ſpeaking in a bottle, or ſome ſuch Juggle, and that where St. *Paul* bid the Spirit come out of her, it is to be underſtood, that he bid her Juggling tricks come out of her.

But to thoſe that rightly conſider this place, it will plainly appear that this Πνευμα Πυθωνος was no other than a Devil; and this being true, I ſee no reaſon to deny that the Witch of *Endor* was poſſeſſed with the ſame Spirit; or that the *Pythons* of *Manaſſes* were Familiar Spirits. Thus I have almoſt done with his firſt Chapter. But I cannot paſs by one argument which he uſes, without taking notice of it; for I cannot tell, ſayes he,

ne, how Witches come in here, no, nor how Devils neither, except you believe that the Devils made anſwer at Heathen Oracles, which if you do, I muſt crave leave to diſſent; truly no man can deny him this leave, and he may diſſent when he pleaſes, but I do not conceive my ſelf obliged to follow his example; for if they were, as he ſuppoſes, onely Jugling tricks of the Prieſts, I cannot imagine how it came to paſs that they ceas'd ſo ſuddenly after our Saviours time: beginning ſenſibly to fall away at the time of his Birth, and ſince his Death being wholly extinguiſh'd. For the firſt, we find ſomething conſiderable in *Suidas*, who writes that *Auguſtus*, who liv'd at the time of our Saviours Birth, as he enquired of an Oracle concerning his Succeſſour, had this anſwer given him.

——— Παῖς

Εβραῖος κέλεταί με, θεοῖς μακάρεσσιν ἀνάσσων
Τόν δε δόμον προλιπεῖν κὶ αἴδην ἄυθις ἱκέσθι
Λοΐπον ἅπισθι σιγῶν ἐκ βωμῶν ἡμετερσῶν.

In English

——— A Boy

*Of* Hebrew *race, whom the bleſt Gods obey,*
*Bids me go hence to Hell without delay,*
*In ſilence from our Altars go thy way.*

Hereupon *Auguſtus* at his return commanded that an Altar ſhould be built in the Capitol, with this inſcription. *HÆC EST ara primogeniti Dei.* Now if this ſtory may be credited, it makes very much for the opinion of the Devils anſwering at the heathen Oracles, and this anſwer is not at all like the fancy of a Juggling Prieſt, it being neither for the Prieſts Intereſt, nor the credit of the Oracle. Thus we ſee how ſoon they began to decay upon our Saviours coming: and we

we find another ſtory to this purpoſe, which happen'd at the time of his Crucifixion, in *Plutarchs* Morals, that part which is intituled περὶ τῶν λελοιπότων χρησηρίων, why Oracles are ceaſed; where he ſayes, that a certain company ſailing from *Greece* towards *Italy*, were ſuddenly becalmed, and heard a voice calling one *Thamus*, who was an *Egyptian*, and at that time in the Ship; but he being called twice gave no anſwer, but at the third time he ſaid here am I; whereupon the voice bid him, when he came at the (*Shelves* in the *Ionian* Seas which are called) *Palodes*, to publiſh that the great God *Pan* was dead; then the Ship going forward, he did as he was commanded; for coming to the *Palodes*, he publiſh'd it from the poop of the Ship; after which immediately followed a great noiſe of many ſhreeking and lamenting together. This being told to *Tiberius* the Emperour, he enquired of the wiſe men of his Empire, who this great God *Pan* ſhould be, but they could give him no better anſwer, than that he was the Son of *Mercury* and

*Penelope*.

*Penelope*. But the circumſtances being conſidered, it was thought by the wiſer ſort to be our bleſſed Saviour, this happening juſt at that time when he dyed upon the Croſs; the Devils making this great lamentation, for that they were from that time to quit thoſe Oracles by which they had ſo long deceiv'd the World. But however it was, we are certain that from that time they began to decay extremely, and in a ſhort time came to nothing; and the famous Oracle of *Delphos* was ſilent in *Juvenal*'s time, as we may ſee by that expreſſion of his, *Delphi Oracula ceſſant*: This their general ſilence is no ſmall Argument that there was ſomething more in them than our Auth[illegible] ſuppoſes; for if they had been no more than ſuch deceits as he ſpeaks of, I ſee no reaſon why they might not have been acted as well ſince our Saviours time as before, for we do not find that men are debarred the liberty of cheating, or that they are leſs cunning now than they were then. But it is probable that God would not ſuffer the Devil to ſtand in ſuch open oppoſition to his

his Sons Kingdom, and to carry on the intereſt of the Kingdom of darkneſs, where the Sun of Righteouſneſs was riſen, and the light of the Goſpel was made manifeſt.

Now by the Title of his ſecond Chapter he would make you believe that he there proves, that the Opinion of Witches had it's beginning from the Heathen fables, but when you come to the Chapter it ſelf, there is no ſuch thing; indeed he tells you a ſtory of one *Lamia*, whoſe Children were killed by *Juno*, and that ſhe out of ſpight uſed to kill thoſe of other Women, and that from thence Witches (being called *Lamiæ*) had their Original: thus, a man who had never ſeen a Swan, might diſpute againſt their being, and ſay that the fancy of Swans had it's firſt riſe from *Ovid*'s Metamorphoſis, becauſe he there ſpeaks of one *Cycnus*, who was chang'd into the firſt Bird of that name. But the weakneſs of this Argument is ſo obvious, that it ſtands not in need of a confutation: then he tels you how far the folly of men (as he calls it) has proceeded in their belief concerning the Actions

of

of Witches, as if, ſays he, they could transform Men and Women into Beaſts, as if they could deſtroy the fruits of the Earth, and the fruit of the Womb, &c. I am of opinion that the moſt rational aſſertors of Witchcraft are as far from believing that the practiſers of it can change the bodies of Men and Women into thoſe of Beaſts, as he is, though the common people that ſearch no farther than the outward ſenſes can diſcover, may believe it. But I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould not allow the Devil a little more cunning than *Pharaoh*'s Magicians, for he grants that they by meer humane Art could ſo far deceive the Spectatours, as to make them believe that their Staves were turned into Serpents; and I think the Devil may go far beyond them in the Art of Juggling, as to do the ſame with the bodies of Men and Women: Beſides, the Devil has thoſe advantages which they had not, for being a Spirit, he can take to himſelf a body of what form he pleaſes, which he may afterwards transform to any other

ſhape;

ſhape; ſo that when we think we ſee the body of a Witch transformed, it may be only the Vehicle of the Devil in her likeneſs. And that he can deſtroy the fruits of the Earth, or of the Womb, and enable or diſenable in matters venerial, ſeems not at all hard to be believ'd, ſeeing humane Art can reach ſo far: as for his raiſing of Winds and Tempeſts, we need no other Argument than that example we have in the firſt Chapter of *Job*, to convinee us of it: Beſides, that he is called in Scripture the Prince of the Air, is ſomething conſiderable to this purpoſe; and 'tis probable that he may as eaſily cauſe Lightnings and Thunder, as he could bring down fire in ſuch abundance upon *Job*'s Servants and Cattel, as to conſume them: now when we find in Scripture, that Winds and Tempeſts have been rais'd by him, I think it is a ſufficient warrant for us to believe that he can do it. Then he tells you that examples of this prodigious power are ſcatter'd up and down the *Roman* Poets, and quotes you two whole ſides out of *Ovid*, *Virgil*,

*Virgil*, *Horace*, *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Lucan*, and alas, all this ſtir to very little (or to ſpeak more truly, to no) purpoſe; but onely to ſhew that theſe Poets did ſpeak of thoſe things, and that indeed he has very clearly demonſtrated: But I will not ſo much as ſuppoſe that he meant from hence to conclude that nothing of this Nature is true, for then I might think that he would ſay, the World had no beginning, becauſe *Ovid* writes of it. But ſayes he, the ingenious Poets themſelves, nor the wiſer ſort of Heathens, did not believe theſe things; and what then? I hope he will not ſay that we muſt believe no more than the wiſer ſort of Heathens did; for if he does (to uſe his own words) I muſt crave leave to diſſent. He ſays he could inſtance in many more of the Ancients (and all, I believe, to as much purpoſe as theſe.) But he will conclude with *Nero* the Emperour, who having ſtudied the Art of Magick, did at laſt deſpiſe it as vain, and promiſing more than it can perform. But what is this to the purpoſe, for it is no

Argu-

Argument to ſay, *Nero* could not be a Witch, *Ergo*, there are no Witches; it may be the Devil thought *Nero* ſure enough without a contract, and 'tis likely that he will not engage himſelf in ſuch bargains when it is no advantage to him. Beſides, the Devil will not appear to Atheiſts, for fear of undeceiving them, and it may be he took this courſe to confirm *Nero* in the belief that there was neither God nor Devils; and it may be that if he had made a contract with *Nero*, he would have required more at his hands than our Witches do, or then he was able to perform; for his ambitious mind could not have contented it ſelf with ſuch petty practices as theirs are; for he had already wherewithall to ſatisfie himſelf in the enjoyment of Worldly pleaſures, and he ſtood not in need of the Devils help or any tricks of Witchcraft to wreak his fury upon thoſe that had offended him: But the Devil uſually takes advantage of poor ſilly wretches, over-ruled by malice and deſire of revenge, and wanting means to execute their malicious

deſigns, whom if he can ſatisfie in this particular, and in the accompliſhing of their inordinate luſts and pleaſures, they aim no farther. But I need not inſiſt upon this; it is enough to ſay, that his not being a Witch, is no Argument againſt the being of Witches in general.

His third Chapter is nothing but the ſtory of the firſt ſetting up of the inquiſition, and of their proceedings; where he tells you what a great number of Witches were then diſcover'd, and ſuppoſes them to have been all innocent, having their confeſſions extorted from them by extremity of torment: truly I cannot ſay any thing to the contrary, but weak ſpirits may by torture be brought to confeſs any thing; and I verily believe that many innocent perſons ſuffered by this cruel way of proceeding, as well as thoſe which were guilty; but I cannot from thence conclude that none were guilty, either there or any where elſe, no more than I can ſay that becauſe many at *Amboyna* were forced by torture to confeſs that they had

had conſpired againſt the Governour, there are no Traytors in the World; ſo that I think I may paſs by this Chapter, and come to the fourth, which by the Title ſeems more conſiderable; for that tells you that there are Arguments to prove that there is no ſuch thing as a Witch in Scripture, as alſo to prove that there is no ſuch thing as a Witch at all.

Now becauſe he has yet ſaid nothing towards it, I ſuppoſe he has reſerved his greateſt ſtrength for this Chapter; ſo that if I can come off here without harm, I ſhall think my buſineſs done; wherefore it will not be amiſs to take theſe Arguments into conſideration.

The firſt, ſays he, ſhall be taken from the difference which is between our vulgarly reputed Witches, and thoſe which our Tranſlatours of the Bible call ſo; for who be they, but the Kings, Queens, and Princes of this World? Whereas now adayes, they are poor, ſilly, and contemptible perſons. Now let any rational perſon judge if there be any force in

this Argument: for ſuppoſing this to be true, there will follow nothing from hence to his purpoſe; for his Argument rightly conſidered ſounds thus,

Our Tranſlatours of the Bible call none but Kings, Queens, and Princes, Witches.
Our Witches now adayes are poor, contemptible perſons.
*Ergo*, there is no ſuch thing as a Witch in Scripture.

This is a ſtrange ſort of Argument to be brought by a rational man, and ſtands rather in need of pity than an anſwer: yet to ſatisfie him I will ſay thus much; that he ought to conſider that the Scripture mentions the Witchcrafts of Kings and Queens, as being the more conſiderable, and ſuch as concern'd all *Iſrael* in general; and alſo, that in writing their lives, theſe practices of theirs could not be omitted: Now it was not at all requiſite that the Scripture ſhould ſpeak of every old Woman in *Iſrael*, that was a Witch, ſince it

was

was nothing pertinent to the ſtory: this I ſay might ſerve to anſwer him, ſuppoſing his aſſertion to be true, that the Scripture makes mention of no other Witches but Kings and Queens; but that is not apparent; for where the ſtory required it, we find that the Scripture does take notice of meaner perſons that practiſed this Art, as in that paſſage of the Witch of *Endor*; as alſo where it is ſaid that *Saul* turn'd them all out of *Iſrael*, for we cannot ſuppoſe that he turn'd out ſo many Kings and Queens; but we may eaſily think that many of them were poor contemptible perſons, as well as ſome of ours.

But ſeeing there is nothing in this Argument to ſtop me, I will paſs to the ſecond, which is drawn from the Sadducees, who denyed Spirits, and the Reſurrection of the Dead, yet had the five Books of *Moſes* in great eſteem among them; wherefore, ſayes he, either they did not underſtand *Hebrew*, or the notion of a Witch does not appear in Scripture. This Argument is as weak as the other,

for if he means that there is no mention of Spirits in Scripture, the contrary is eaſily proved, what ever the Sadduces thought; and it is very manifeſt from many places of Scripture that there were both good and evil Spirits: in the nineteenth Chapter of *Geneſis*, and the firſt verſe, it is ſaid that two Angels came to *Sodom*; ſo in the thirty ſecond Chapter, and the firſt verſe, *Jacob* went on his way, and the Angels of God met him; ſo we read that *Jacob*, in his dream, ſaw a Ladder that reacht from Earth to Heaven, and the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending on it: many other places there are where mention is made of the Angels of God: Now in the ſeventeenth of *Leviticus*, and the ſeventh verſe, it is ſaid, and they ſhall no more offer their Sacrifices unto Devils; and in the thirty ſecond of *Deuteronomy*, and the ſeventeenth, they Sacrificed to Devils, not unto God; and other examples of this kind might be produced; yet by his Argument nothing of all this ſhould be found in Scripture. Now if he once yields (as he

he muſt do) that the notion of a Devil appears in Scripture, for what end ſerves his Argument drawn from the Sadduces, but to ſhew that they were in an errour, and mis-underſtood the Bible: But I cannot be convinced that the Sadduces denied the being of Spirits in general; though we read that they deny'd the Reſurrection, or that there was either Angel or Spirit, for that has reference only to the Spirits of Dead men; for if they had denied all Spirits and Angels, 'tis not likely that our Saviour would have told them, as he did, that men in the Reſurrection ſhould be as the Angels of God; for what would ſuch a compariſon have ſignified to thoſe who denied that there were ſuch things as Angels. Now if we believe that they acknowledged any Spirits, whence can we draw an Argument to prove that they denyed the being of Devils. But whatever the opinion of the Sadduces was, we are not to be governed by their Judgment, in deciding whether or no the notion of a Witch appears in Scripture, but by our own; nei-

ther have we any great reaſon to rely upon their underſtanding of the Scriptures, though this Author ſayes much for it; ſeeing our Saviour tells them that they erred, not knowing the Scriptures. Now for his third and laſt Argument, which is taken from the different practices of thoſe whom our Tranſlatours call Witches, and thoſe which are vulgarly ſuppoſed to be ſo; for ſayes he, our modern Witches practiſe an occult and ſecret Art, and 'tis great Art to diſcover them, by ſeveral ſtrange ſigns and horrid tortures; but the others practis'd what they did openly and in the face of the World: I have this to anſwer, that he is extremely deceiv'd in this point, for that the Witch of *Endor* practis'd openly, is not to be imagined, ſeeing ſhe was ſo cautious when *Saul* came to her, that ſhe durſt not do any thing till he had ſworn to her that ſhe ſhould have no harm, but asked him why he laid a ſnare for her Life. And ſince the Law was ſo ſtrict againſt them, as it is in the twentieth of *Levititus*, and the twenty ſeventh verſe, where it is

ſaid,

ſaid, *A Man or a Woman that hath a Familiar Spirit thou ſhalt not ſuffer to live, but ſhalt ſtone him with ſtones, his blood ſhall be upon him* (I ſay where ſuch a Law was in force) it is not likely that this Art was practiſed openly, and in the face of the World, as he ſayes, but that they were as private as ours are: but, ſayes he, if they were ſo, how impoſſible was it for *Saul* to turn them all out of *Iſrael*? 'Tis true indeed, it was impoſſible for him, neither did he, for the Witch of *Endor* was yet there; and if one remained, there might be as well a hundred, or a thouſand, notwithſtanding his objection of the firſt of *Samuel*, and twenty eighth Chapter, where we read that *Saul* had put away thoſe that had Familiar Spirits out of the Land; which muſt of neceſſity be underſtood, that he put the Law in Execution againſt them, putting all thoſe to death which were diſcovered, ſo that they durſt not practiſe openly; and ſo he might well be ſaid to put them out of the Land, though there were hundreds yet remaining,

ing, which practiſed ſecretly and by ſtealth, becauſe he uſed all poſſible means for the rooting them out of *Iſrael*; neither can he certainly ſay that *Manaſſes* practiſed this Art openly, for the Scripture onely ſayes that he uſed Inchantments, and Divinations, and dealt with Familiar Spirits, which he might do privately, though he was a King: yet I can eaſily grant that when both King and people were wholly given up to Idolatry, and all other wickedneſs, any thing might be practiſed openly; wherefore that hinders not but it might be the ſame Art which our Witches uſe now adayes, though practiſed in a different manner. Thus I have done with his Arguments, by which he endeavoured to prove that there is no ſuch thing as a Witch in Scripture, and am now come to thoſe by which he undertakes to prove that there is no ſuch thing as a Witch at all.

To his firſt I perceive I ſhall not need to ſay much; it being onely this; that ſeeing there is no ſuch thing in Scripture, it follows there is no ſuch thing at all: therefore

therefore I ſhall onely ſay, that ſeeing the force of this Argument depends wholly upon thoſe which went before, they being already anſwered, this may keep them company. Now he objects, that the Law of *Moſes* being ſo ſtrict againſt beſtial and inceſtuous Concubinage, it would ſeem very ſtrange, the Opinion of Witches being true, that it ſhould not ſo much as mention Diabolical. To this I anſwer, that it is not at all ſtrange that it ſhould not mention particularities, when the whole Art is forbidden upon pain of Death; for in that Law [thou ſhalt not ſuffer a Witch to live;] this and all other their wicked Actions, were included. So that, whether it was Diabolical Copulation, or killing of Men or Beaſts by Witchcrafts, or any other Action of this Nature, all was puniſh'd when the Witch was ſton'd to death. His ſecond Argument is taken from the miſerable poverty of our vulgarly reputed Witches, for, ſayes he, I am not willing to believe that they have ſuch a power with the Devil, as to make him do wonderful things

at their command, when they cannot command him to fetch them money, &c. To this I anſwer, that certainly the Devil deludes theſe people with the enjoyment of all ſorts of pleaſures which they deſire, if not in reality, at leaſt in the imagination, which is all one to them, as if they were real. Now riches not being deſirable for themſelves alone, but onely as they conduce to a pleaſant life, if they can obtain this without them, I ſee no reaſon why they ſhould command the Devil to fetch them money: Beſides, as they are people of a baſe and degenerate ſpirit, having no aim but malice and revenge, and the ſatisfying of their beaſtly luſts, and coming as near as is poſſible to the Nature of the Devils themſelves, ſuch a ſordid way of living may be more ſuitable to their temper; as alſo they may out of policy chooſe ſuch an obſcure and contemptible life to avoid ſuſpition, and that they might have the greater freedom to practiſe their wicked Arts, their Actions not being ſo much pryed into, as thoſe of more conſiderable perſons. Theſe

reaſons

reaſons may ſuffice, though many more might be given for the removing of this objection. In the third place he ſayes, that the opinion of Witchcraft is attended either with irrationality or impiety, for that it is irrational to think that the Devil being ſo full of malice, and breathing nothing but miſchief againſt men, ſhould ſuffer any man to live, when he can ſo eaſily kill us at the command of a Witch: To this I ſay, that the Devil cannot go beyond his Commiſſion, and that it is in Gods power to ſtop the courſe of the Devils malice, when, and where he pleaſes. Beſides, 'tis very probable, that the Laws by which the Devils are governed, do not allow them that freedom; for by that means the intereſt of the dark Kingdom would not be carried on, ſeeing it is the ruine of the Souls of men, not the deſtruction of their Bodies, by which it is eſtabliſhed. So that cunning and ſlye temptations are more advantagious to this end, than open violence; for if the Devil ſhould take this courſe to wreak his malice upon men, they would be more

more ſenſible of his miſchievous practices; and finding themſelves too weak to make reſiſtance, it might be a means to draw them from their evil courſes, and make them run to God for ſuccour. This I ſay may be ſuppos'd, and it is enough to clear this opinion of irrationality, if we can gueſs at a reaſon why the Devil would not take this courſe, though he had his liberty of hurting whom he pleas'd; but it is certain that neither Devils nor Witches can hurt us without Gods permiſſion. But I ſee no ſuch impiety in ſaying that God does many times permit ſuch Actions (as the Author ſeems to think there is,) for then it were as impious to ſay that God ſuffers us to be tempted to ſin; yet we are certain that the Devil cannot do it without his permiſſion; as appears by that expreſſion of St. *Paul*, *He will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able*, &c. So if we acknowledge that God is omnipotent, we muſt confeſs that no wickedneſs could be done in the World without his permiſſion, ſeeing it is in his power to prevent it;

it; and there is no impiety in affirming that though God of his great mercy may preſerve any man from falling into ſin, yet he is not bound to do it, neither does he, as we ſee by daily experience; and if we once grant that he ſuffers men to ſin, where lyes the impiety of ſaying that he permits Witchcraft? If we do not deny that God ſuffers one man to murther another, why ſhould we not, without impiety, confeſs that he ſuffers Witches to do the ſame thing? Certainly no reaſon can be given why it ſhould be more impious to ſay that he permits one ſin, then another; and if not, I ſee none, why this opinion ſhould be charged with either irrationality or impiety.

His laſt objection is as malicious as it is frivolous; for, ſayes he, the opinion of Witchcraft being true, no man can be able by the light of reaſon to know if Chriſt were a Witch or no. But if he had conſidered the difference between the miracles wrought by the Holy Jeſus, and the Impoſtures of Witches; if he had conſidered the different ends to which they tend, if he had

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had any regard to the life and converſation of our Bleſſed Saviour, and that of an Impoſtor, the holineſs of the one, and the wickedneſs of the other, if he had weigh'd the words of our Saviour, *You ſhall know the Tree by it's fruit; can one gather Grapes of Thornes, or Figgs of Thiſtles?* he might have ſpared this Objection.

Who ever believed, of all the rational aſſertors of VVitchcraft, that an Impoſtor could infallibly cure all diſeaſes by a word of his mouth, or a touch of his hand? That he could raiſe the dead to life, after they had been ſo long buried as to ſtink in their Graves? That he could feed five thouſand with five loaves and two fiſhes; that he could cauſe the Earth to tremble, and the Sun to be darkened at his death? The graves of dead men to be opened, and their Bodies to ariſe to accompany him at his Reſurrection; finally, that he could raiſe himſelf after three dayes burial, and converſe for ſome days with men, and at laſt glorioufly to aſcend up to Heaven in the ſight of ſeveral witneſſes. Methinks

Methinks the manner of our Saviours Birth is enough to ſatisfie us in this particular, that he was born of a Virgin, that a glorious Star appeared over the place of his birth, that a company of Heavenly Angels were ſent to proclaim it, as tidings of joy to the whole World; and that the wiſe men being led by his Star, which they had ſeen in the East, came ſo far to worſhip him, and bring him preſents. Much more might be ſaid to ſhew the great difference between them; but I think it is ſo viſible to thoſe who have read the life of our Saviour in the four Evangeliſts, that I ſhall not need to inſiſt upon it; I will onely add, that the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition, the ſincerity of his Doctrine, the holineſs of his life and converſation, his tranſcendent knowledge, his zeal for the glory of God, and the Salvation of men, are infallible Teſtimonies to prove that he was no Impoſtor: So that, if whatever has been by the common people aſcribed to Witches, which ſeems miraculous, were really true, and that they had done

all, or more than has ever been believ'd of them; yet ſhould we have no reaſon to doubt of our Bleſſed Saviours Divinity; and his faith that thinks ſo, is but weakly grounded, and in danger of being ſhaken by every ſtrange Action, which is beyond the reach of his underſtanding. Our Saviour himſelf has told us that falſe Chriſts ſhall come, with ſigns and wonders able to deceive, if it were poſſible, the very Elect, which is enough to convince us, notwithſtanding this Authors objection, that ſuch miraculous Actions may be performed without a Divine commiſſion, as may carry with them a great ſhew of Divine power; but he is in a deplorable condition that from thence concludes that Chriſt Jeſus might be an Impoſtor. Thus I have done with his objections; after which he tells you his opinion of the Nature and power of Devils; I believe, ſayes he, that the Devils are aërial Creatures, and though they have more skill, ſtrength, and agility than men, yet they act as men do by applying Natural Agents and Patients, one to the other,

other, in this ſublunary VVorld; but as for the VVorld ætherial, or cœleſtial, I ſuppoſe they have no power there, but conſequently that the wind bloweth when and where it liſteth; and that the ſeaſons of the year are neither promoted nor hindred by them, or the fruits of the Earth: To this I anſwer, that I think it is apparent out of the firſt Chapter of *Job*, that the Devil may raiſe winds and Tempeſts; but I am of his opinion, that he cannot promote or hinder the ſeaſons of the year, or alter the courſe of the Stars and Planets; as for the laſt, touching the fruits of the Earth, he himſelf has ſaid enough againſt it, in the eleventh page of his Book, where he ſayes that men by their well ordering the ſeeds of Plants may ſtrangely promote the generation of ſuch Plants, and the ripening of their Fruits; therefore he adds, the Devils being more skilful than men may ſtrangely promote the generation of ſeveral Creatures. Thus having anſwered himſelf, he has ſav'd me the labour; and I ſee very little, or no reaſon that he has, to tax the

affirmers of Witchcraft, with approaching to the opinion of the *Persians*, of two great principles of good and evil, both Almighty; for by the opinion of Witchcraft, nothing of omnipotency is ascribed to the Devil, as he supposes; and by this saying, he seems not to understand what is meant by omnipotency; for any one Action, how strange soever it seems to us, cannot be an Argument to prove an omnipotency in the doer; so to say, if the Devil can raise a wind, he must be omnipotent, is ridiculous, as much as if he said, I can blow with a pair of Bellows, *Ergo*, I am omnipotent; I can do one thing, *Ergo*, I can do all things: if the Devil raises a wind, he does but Act upon natural Bodies, and by natural means, which requires nothing of omnipotency. So if he causes Thunders, or Lightnings, or if he changes one Body into another, he has still matter to work upon, and so long we may suppose any thing to be done without omnipotency, because we know not how far the Laws of Nature are intended.

Now

Now for what he quotes out of the *Ancyran* council, it is not much to be regarded, for it ſeems not to have been intended againſt the opinion of Witches in general; but to ſhew the folly of thoſe Witches which believ'd the illuſions of the Devil to be realities, and profeſſed that in the night time they converſed with *Diana*, or ſome other heathen god, or goddeſs: for they feared leſt by this their folly the common people might be led to the old errour of the heathens, in believing a plurality of gods: this ſeems very plain from the words of the Council; ——— *Quod quædam ſceleratæ mulieres retro poſt ſathanam converſæ, dæmonum illuſionibus, & phantasmatibus ſeductæ, ſe nocturnis horis cum Diana Paganorum Dea, &c. ſuper quasdam beſtias equitare*; and a little after, *nam innumera multitudo hac falſa opinione decepta, hæc vera eſſe credit, & credendo, a recta fide deviat, & in errorem paganorum devolvitur, cum aliquid numinis, aut divinitatis extra unum Deum arbitratur.*

Now that Witches are deluded by the

Devil, and made to believe those things which are many times false, is not to be question'd; but it does not follow, because they are deluded, that they are no Witches; neither can I find one sentence in all this decree to prove it: 'tis true, they have endeavoured to shew that these nocturnal pleasures and recreations are onely imaginary, and delusions of the Devil, and this seems to be the scope of the whole decree: and the other decree, —— *Siquis credit quod Diabolus aliquando creaturas in Mundo facerit, et tonitrua, et fulgura, &c. sua authoritate fecerit, sicut dixit Priscillianus, anathema sit*; It was made against that errour of *Priscillian*, that the Devil has a power in the things of this World, equal to that of God, and can do these things at his own will and pleasure; wherefore these words, *Sua authoritate*, are put in; but it does not at all deny that he can do those things with Gods permission; and if it had, I think the authority is not so great, but that of the Scripture is to be preferred before it. As for that which he objects

that the Devil did no more in the caſe of *Job*, than *Elijah*, or any mortal man may do when he receives a commiſſion from God, I think the contrary may be gathered from the Scripture, I mean, that it was wholly Sathans doing, having only obtain'd leave from God, for, God ſaid to him, *all that he has is in thy power*; and the ſame expreſſion is again uſed in the ſecond Chapter, and the ſixth verſe; *Behold, he is in thy power*; by which expreſſions we may gather, that God left it to him, and acted nothing of it himſelf; and it immediately follows, *Sathan went out from the preſence of the Lord, and ſmote* Job *with ſore boyls from the head to the foot*; it is not ſaid, the Lord ſmote him; now if this laſt was done by the Devil, why not all the reſt? Beſides, if God had been the Actor, the limitation, *onely upon himſelf ſtretch not forth thine hand*, had been altogether needleſs. Thus I have done with his fourth Chapter, and am come to his fifth, which he intitles, An anſwer to their Arguments which endeavour to prove,

that there are Witches, where I find the Arguments which he produces againſt himſelf, to be theſe: firſt, that Drums and Trumpets have been heard when neither Drummer nor Trumpeter was near. Secondly, that the perſons tormented have fallen into their fits upon the ſight of the ſuſpected Witches. Thirdly, that immediately upon the threatning, or curſing of this or that perſon, ſuch an accident has happened to the party threatned or curſed. And laſtly, that the Witches themſelves have confeſſed it. The firſt he yields to be true, being unwilling (as he ſayes) to gainſay the authority of ſo many in the world, who affirm it to be ſo, but he denys that from hence the being of Witches may be proved: it is eaſily thought this Author would not raiſe a Devil which he could not lay again; and that of ſo many Arguments as may be brought too for the proof of Witches, he would only make choice of ſuch as he could anſwer, or at leaſt would ſo order the matter, as to leave out the moſt material circumſtances, thereby to render

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the Argument invalid; for it is true (as he ſayes) that onely to hear Drums and Trumpets, and to ſee Chairs and Stools move about a Room, and no body touching the one or the other, proves no more than the being of Spirits; but (becauſe he ſeems to allude to that ſtory of Mr. *Mompeſſon's* houſe in *Wiltſhire*) I will thus anſwer him; that, if theſe things ſhall happen in a Gentlemans houſe, which was formerly undiſturb'd, meerly upon the taking away of an idle fellows Drum; if the Devil by ſuch and ſuch ſigns being demanded, ſhall declare that the Drummer employ'd him; if upon the Drummers being condemned, and ſent to the Iſlands, ſhall be quiet, and upon his return theſe diſturbances ſhall be renew'd, theſe circumſtances will render the Argument of no ſmall force to prove contracts with the Devil. Now if he has ever heard the true Relation of the forementionⁿd ſtory, he will find in it all this that I have ſaid. The ſecond Argument, that upon the ſight of the Witch the party has fallen into his fit,

&c. he anſwers thus: firſt, he objects that theſe ſtories are different from the former, in this, that thoſe are atteſted by ſeveral perſons of Credit, and theſe are grounded onely in the Juggling deluſions of Impoſtors, and the fooliſh miſtakes of the vulgar: to which I anſwer, that he ſpeaks with too much haſte, and conſiders not that theſe things have been ſworn by innumerable, and many of them perſons of credit, before Judges of Aſſize, and in the face of the Countrey; and that Judges are not generally ſo careleſs of what they do, as to take away the lives of ſo many hundreds, upon no better ground than the fooliſh miſtakes of the Vulgar. Secondly, he ſayes, that if he grants theſe things to be true, he yet ſees no reaſon to grant that there are Witches, but rather to conclude that theſe Spirits, which are ſo gameſome, in doing us miſchiefs, when they perceive that any are ſuſpected to have ſet them on work, uſe theſe tricks to confirm the ſuſpition, making it their ſport to ſee poor innocent people hang'd. Here I will make him

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the ſame objection as he made againſt the being of VVitches, which is, that if the Devil could by ſuch tricks as theſe ſo eaſily deprive innocent people of their lives, 'tis irrational to think that he would ſuffer any body to live, conſidering his great malice; and if he anſwers, that he cannot do it without Gods permiſſion, I will ſay, in his own words, that 'tis impious to concern the great God with theſe deſigns of the Devil to take away innocent perſons lives: thus by denying of VVitchcraft, he is fallen himſelf into the ſame irrationality, or impiety, of which he accuſed the aſſertors of it. But if, as he ſayes, the Devil ſhould by ſuch tricks endeavour the ruine of poor innocent people, 'tis not probable, that he could make thoſe perſons Actors in their own ruine, ſo that all their words and actions ſhould contribute to it; as it happens for the moſt part, for it is ſeldom known that people are hanged, becauſe others fell into their fits at the ſight of them, without any other evidence againſt them, but ſome ſuſpitious actions of their own con-

curring. To the third, which is, that upon their threatning or curſing ſuch things have happen'd to the party curſed, he anſwers, that it is not to be wondred at, if in the VVorld there has often happened a notable concurrence of Events, &c. this I ſuppoſe he ſaid, meerly for want of ſomething elſe to ſay; for it is not at all conceivable (though once in a hundred years ſuch a thing may come to paſs, as that upon an Old VVomans curſing a man may immediately fall ſick, or dye) that it ſhould be ſo frequently done, and that ſuch events ſhould conſtantly attend the curſes of ſome particular perſons, more than others. The laſt Argument is from the confeſſion of the VVitch; and he anſwers it thus; that the wiſeſt man in the world may by torture be brought to confeſs any thing, whether it be true or falſe: this anſwer ſeems very weak, when we conſider, that this way of forcing confeſſions by torture is not in uſe with us, and by conſequence, that can be no reaſon why our Witches ſhould confeſs themſelves

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to be ſo, except it were really true. But that anſwer not ſufficing, he has another, which is, that he believes, that ſome ſilly Old Women overgrown with melancholy and dotage, have really believ'd themſelves to be Witches, and to have done thoſe things which not onely their fooliſh Neighbours, but worſhipful men in the World, have charged them with. But ſuppoſe ſome one, or two, have been ſo extreamly fooliſh, as to be perſwaded into that belief againſt their own knowledge, can it be thought that all were ſo? Or if we could conceive that any perſons by being accus'd could be made to believe that they were Witches, what is that to thoſe who have freely accus'd themſelves without ſo much as being ſuſpected by others? Or what to thoſe, who after they had paſt the danger of being perſwaded into this folly, and had ſtood it out to the laſt with a ſtiff denyal, notwithſtanding the clear evidences brought in, and ſworn againſt them, after, I ſay, that they had paſt all this, without confeſſion, have afterwards penitently acknowledged all upon

the Ladder? To ſuch as theſe his anſwer reaches not; yet, that many ſuch have been, is evident to any but thoſe who believe no more than they have ſeen themſelves. Now, to ſuppoſe that an Old Man or VVoman, ſunk in melancholy, may be perſwaded to think themſelves VVitches, is excuſable, if that were all, but to believe, that not onely the Old man or woman, but the Judge, the Jury, and the whole Aſſize, ſhould be thus abus'd, the witneſſes forſwearing themſelves, only to hang poor innocent people that have done them no harm; and that not onely one Judge, one Jury, and one Aſſize, ſhould be ſo fool'd, but thouſands of each, and all with nothing; and to imagine that whole Countries, nay, all the Chriſtian world, ſhould be ſo over-ſpread with folly, as to eſtabliſh Laws againſt a ſort of people which never were in being, is a madneſs of which whoſoever is guilty, wants but one ſtep more to become a Sceptick, and reject the Teſtimony of his own ſenſes.

Thus, Sir, I have anſwered, I think, what

what is moſt conſiderable in this Book; I will paſs by the ſixth Chapter, as having nothing in it which requires an anſwer, it being little more than what has been ſaid before, and onely to ſhew his fancy touching the firſt entrance of this Opinion of VVitchcraft into the world; ſo that the truth of this aſſertion being once proved, the ground upon which that Chapter ſtands is taken away. And now Sir, it is time that I free you from this trouble (if you have had the patience to ſuffer it thus far) and that I beg your pardon for thoſe many errours, of which either haſte or ignorance have made me guilty; which if you grant me, you will abundantly obliedge,

*SIR*,

Your moſt faithful
Servant.